



Chinese Takeout Cucumber Dan Dan Noodles + On-the-Go Ginger Cucumber Boba Tea

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 24 / Cook Time 20 / Serves 4 - 6

Shopping List

FRESH

1 1/4 lbs cucumbers (approximately 4 to 6 depending on size)

1 1/2 inch fresh ginger root

1 to 2 green onions

1 lime

PANTRY

3 C egg noodles or long pasta, like linguine ****(see allergy subs below)****

1/2 C tahini ****(see allergy subs below)****

3/4 C + 2 T granulated sugar, brown sugar, honey, or agave nectar

3 T soy sauce + more to taste ****(see allergy subs below)****

1 1/2 T rice vinegar or white vinegar

1/2 tsp ground black pepper

salt, to taste

hot sauce or hot pepper flakes, optional

1 C tapioca starch or flour (found at natural grocery stores, Asian markets, and larger grocery stores)

HAVE ON HAND

2 1/4 to 3 1/4 C water + more for cooking noodles and boba

2 C ice

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

toss: to lightly lift and drop food items together or coat food items with flour, or a sauce or dressing, as in a salad.

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

taste: to put a bit of food or drink in your mouth to determine whether more of an ingredient is needed to improve the flavor.

scoop: to pick up an amount of food with a utensil to move it to a dish, pan, or container; utensils that can be used to scoop are spoons, dishers (small scoops used for cookie dough or melon balls), ice cream scoops, or large transfer scoops for bulk foods.

drain: to pour excess liquid from food into a container if reserving the liquid, or into the sink or trash if not saving it.

blend: to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

boil: to cook a food in liquid heated to the point of gas bubbles and steam forming (boiling point is 212 F at sea level).

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

juice: to extract or squeeze out the juice of a fruit or vegetable, like a lemon, orange, or carrot, often cutting open or peeling the fruit or veggie first to access its flesh.

knead: to work dough by pushing, pulling, and folding it by hand or with a stand mixer.

roll: to use a rolling pin to flatten dough; use your hands to form a roll or ball shape; or move a round food, like a grape or a meatball, through another food, like sugar or breadcrumbs, to coat it.

steep: to soak a food, like tea, in water or other liquid so as to bring out its flavor.

Equipment

Large pot

Liquid measuring cup

Dry measuring cups

- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Small metal spoon
- Colander or strainer
- Grater
- Measuring spoons
- Large mixing bowl
- Whisk
- Medium saucepan
- Wooden spoon
- Small mixing bowls (2)
- Citrus juicer, optional
- Cups

Ingredients

Chinese Takeout Cucumber Dan Dan Noodles

- 3 C egg noodles or long pasta, like linguine **** (for EGG/CELIAC/GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 3 C Asian rice noodles)****
- 1 lb cucumbers
- 1/2 inch fresh ginger root for 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 to 2 green onions
- 1/2 C tahini **** (for SESAME ALLERGY sub 1/2 C sunflower seed butter)****
- 2 T granulated sugar, brown sugar, honey, or agave nectar
- 3 T soy sauce + more to taste **** (CELIAC/GLUTEN/SOY ALLERGY sub coconut aminos)****
- 1 1/2 T rice vinegar or white wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- water, up to 1/4 C, for thinning sauce if needed
- salt, to taste

hot sauce or hot pepper flakes, optional

On-the-Go Ginger Cucumber Boba Tea

Boba:

1/2 C water

1 C tapioca starch (flour) (found at natural grocery stores, Asian markets, and larger grocery stores)

1/4 C honey, agave nectar, or sugar water

Ginger cucumber tea:

1/2 C water

1 inch fresh ginger root

1/2 C honey, brown sugar, granulated sugar, or agave nectar

1 lime

1/2 small cucumber

1 to 2 C cold water

2 C ice

Food Allergen Substitutions

Chinese Takeout Cucumber Dan Dan Noodles

Egg/Celiac/Gluten/Wheat: For 3 C egg noodles, substitute 3 C Asian rice noodles.

Sesame: For 1/2 C tahini, substitute 1/2 C sunflower seed butter.

Celiac/Gluten/Wheat/Soy: For 3 T soy sauce, substitute 3 T coconut aminos.

On-the-Go Ginger Cucumber Boba Tea

Instructions

Chinese Takeout Cucumber Dan Dan Noodles

cook + slice + scoop + drain

Cook **3 cups of egg noodles** according to package directions. While the noodles cook, slice **1 pound of cucumbers** in half lengthwise and, using a spoon, scoop out and discard the seeds. Drain the noodles and set them aside.

grate + chop

Grate the cucumbers and **1/2 inch ginger root**. Then, chop **1 to 2 green onions** and set them aside.

measure + whisk

In a large bowl, measure and whisk together **1/2 cup tahini, 2 tablespoons sugar, 3 tablespoons soy sauce, 1 1/2 tablespoons rice vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper,** and **1 teaspoon grated ginger**. Count to 5 in Chinese while whisking: 1 yī (eee), 2 èr (arr), 3 sān (sahn), 4 sì (ssuh), 5 wǔ (woo).

heat + stir + toss

Pour the mixture into a saucepan and heat it until it bubbles, about 3 minutes. If needed, thin the sauce with hot water so that it is about the consistency of heavy cream; you may need up to a **1/4 cup of water**. Stir the **grated cucumbers** into the sauce, then toss the **cooked noodles** and **chopped green onions** with the sauce and grated cucumbers in the saucepan.

taste + add

Taste and add **salt** or **hot sauce** if desired. "Chī hǎo hē hǎo" (Chuh how huh how) or "Enjoy your meal" in Chinese!

On-the-Go Ginger Cucumber Boba Tea

boil + add + knead

First, we'll make the boba! Boil **1/2 cup of water**. Measure **1 cup of tapioca starch** into a bowl and work the hot water in little by little, in case it isn't all needed. Kneading with your hands is the best way to incorporate the water and make a dough that isn't sticky. Be careful not to burn yourself, though!

roll + cut + roll

Once you have some workable, cool, tapioca dough, give kids a piece of the dough and have them roll their pieces into long snakes. Then, they can cut them into small pieces and roll them into tiny pearl-sized balls.

boil + float + transfer

Boil at least twice as much water in a saucepan as the volume of tapioca pearls you are going to cook. Carefully add your homemade boba to the boiling water. When they float to the top, turn the heat down to medium. You'll notice that the boba begin to cook and get their chewy texture almost immediately. Remove the boba from the hot water and transfer them to a bowl with **1/4 cup of honey, agave nectar, or sugar water**. This will help preserve them until you're ready to use them, as well as slightly sweeten them and keep them from sticking to each other.

boil + steep

Now, we'll make the tea! Boil **1/2 cup of water** and add **1 inch ginger root** and **1/2 cup honey**. Steep for 5 to 20 minutes.

juice + chop + blend

Slice **1 lime** in half and squeeze the juice into your blender (or a pitcher for use with an immersion blender). Chop and add **1/2 small cucumber**. Carefully remove and discard the ginger from the hot water and add the **sweetened ginger water** to your blender along with **1 to 2 cups cold water**. Blend until smooth.

spoon + pour + serve

Boba seem to have the best texture when warm, so for cold boba tea, it's best to spoon them into cups while they are warm, then pour the cold tea over them, add **ice**, and serve immediately! "Ganbei" (Gahn bay) or "Cheers" in Chinese!

Featured Ingredient: Cucumber!

Hi! I'm Cucumber!

"I'm as cool as a cucumber. Actually, I am a cucumber! I have a thick, dark green peel; I am longer than I am wide; and I am a fruit that's often used as a veggie! There are three types of cucumbers: slicing, pickling, and burpless. The slicing and burpless varieties, with or without their peels, are tasty and refreshing sliced, chopped, or minced in salads, sandwiches, salsa, sauces, appetizers, and smoothies or other drinks. The pickling cucumber eventually becomes a pickle (after its pickling spa treatment)!"

History & Etymology

Cucumbers are one of the oldest known cultivated vegetables. They have been grown for at least 3,000 years and are believed to have originated in India.

The early Greeks or Romans may have introduced cucumbers to Europe. Records indicate that the French cultivated them in the 9th century and the English in the 14th century. Then Spanish explorers brought cucumbers to the Americas in the 16th century.

Pickled cucumbers, or pickles, may have been produced first by workers building the Great Wall of China or by people in Mesopotamia's Tigris Valley.

A 1630 book called "New England's Plantation" by Francis Higginson, describing plants grown in a garden on Conant's Island in Boston Harbor, mentions "cowcumbers." The cucumber may have been dubbed cucumber due to thinking at that time that uncooked vegetables were fit only for cows.

The word "cucumber" comes from late Middle English, from the Old French "cocombre," from the Latin "cucumis."

Anatomy

The cucumber is a creeping vine plant that is part of the Cucurbitaceae or gourd family. Other members

are melon, squash, pumpkin, and watermelon. Cucumbers grow on a vine, often in sandy soil. Sandy soil warms faster in the spring, giving cucumbers a more favorable growing environment.

Cucumber length varies. Slicers are 6 to 8 inches, burpless 8 to 10 inches, and picklers are 3 to 5 inches long.

Cucumbers have a mild melon flavor. Slicing cucumbers will have seeds in their flesh, preferably small, soft seeds. Burpless cucumbers are slightly sweeter with a more tender skin and are easier to digest. They may also have no or very few seeds.

"Cool as a cucumber" isn't just a catchy phrase. A cucumber's inner temperature can be 10 to 20 degrees cooler than the outside air. This is because it consists mainly of water, which also applies to watermelons, and it takes more energy to heat the water inside the cucumber than the air around it. No wonder these are such summertime favorites! However, we don't say "as cool as a watermelon," so how did this expression become part of our vocabulary? It may have come from a poem in John Gay's *Poems, New Song on New Similes* from 1732.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Cucumbers are ready to be harvested 50 to 70 days after planting. They are ripe when they are firm and bright or dark green. Slicing cucumbers will be six to eight inches long. Avoid leaving them on the vine too long, or their taste may become bitter and their rind tougher.

At the store, look for firm cucumbers without blemishes, wrinkles, or soft spots. Organic cucumbers are the best choice to avoid pesticide residue, if available. In addition, washing them reduces the amount of residue and pathogens.

If you don't eat your fresh, uncut cucumbers immediately, store them in your refrigerator crisper drawer in a plastic bag for up to three days if unwaxed and up to a week if waxed.

You can eat slicing and burpless cucumbers by themselves, slice or chop them into salads, or blend them into sauces and smoothies.

Pickling cucumbers are pickled whole or sliced in brine, sugar, vinegar, and spices. There are several kinds of pickles, such as sweet, bread-and-butter, gherkin, and kosher dill.

Nutrition

Cucumbers are 96 percent water, have very little fat, and are low in calories.

Cucumbers contain small amounts of the vitamins you need every day and 16 percent of the daily value of vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting.